

BRUM GROUP NEWS

February
1991

Issue
No. 233

The monthly Newsletter of the BIRMINGHAM SCIENCE FICTION GROUP

(Honorary Presidents: Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison)

1991 Committee: Group Chairman - Chris Chivers, Secretary - Helena Bowles,
Treasurer - Richard Standage, Newsletter Editor - Martin Tudor,
Publicity Officer - Al Johnston, Ordinary Member (Reviews Editor) - Mick Evans
Novacon 21 Chairman - Nick Mills

THIS MONTH'S PROGRAMME Friday 15th February at 7.45pm

Admission: Members £1.25 Visitors £2.50

This month's speaker is: **Richard Evans**

Richard Evans entered publishing in 1972, working for Ward Lock Educational. In the years following this he worked at Penguin, instigated a science fiction line (with Colin Murray) at Fontana, spent two years with Arrow and five with Futura/Orbit. After leaving Futura/Orbit he worked for eighteen months as a freelance, during which time he helped establish Headline.

Early in 1990, when Malcolm Edwards, who was in charge of sf at Victor Gollancz, moved to Grafton, Richard took charge of the Gollancz science fiction and fantasy line. Today he is Senior Editor at Gollancz and Publishing Director of their sf division.

At this month's meeting Richard will be talking about "The State of the SF Market" from the point of view of publishers and writers.

The BSFG meets on the third Friday of every month (unless otherwise notified) in the upstairs room of the Ivy Bush, on the corner of Hagley Road and Monument Road, Birmingham at 7.45pm.

Subscription Rates: £6.00 per person, or £9.00 for two members at the same address. Cheques etc. payable to the BSFG via the Treasurer, Richard Standage, at meetings, or by post c/o Mick Evans (address below).

Book Reviews to: MICK EVANS at 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

All other contributions and enquiries to: MARTIN TUDOR, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG (Telephone 021 328 2161).

AN EDITORIAL OF SORTS

by Martin Tudor

I have dispensed with the report of Last Month's meeting this issue as it was 'only' the AGM and nothing momentous happened that can't be gleaned elsewhere in these pages (ie. the cover reveals the names of this year's committee and Vernon's piece below is self-explanatory).

This issue has inevitably run into a few teething problems which will be obvious to you as you read this, but which will hopefully be sorted out next time. If you're unhappy, or happy, with anything herein please WRITE and let me know, see you on Friday.

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THE SOCIAL COLUMN

by Vernon Brown

The last five or six years have seen the social side of the BSFG dwindle to the point where members depart meetings as soon as the "formal item" is over. Why this has happened I don't know - perhaps it's a reflection of today's society, perhaps fans themselves have a different attitude to sf (or what is passed off as sf), but looking back to Christmas Parties with food, films and frolics music, to evenings out to barbeques and breweries, fun quizzes with most people participating, entries in the Lord Mayors Procession (where did that sea monster end up ?), film trips and discussions in the bar 'til past closing time, I believe that the Group then was a group, rather than a number of BSFG members who happen to be in the same room at the same time. And this is not just nostalgia talking - a good social atmosphere is unrivalled for integrating new members into and holding together any group, from workplace to sportsfield.

So at this year's AGM I put forward a proposal, which was accepted by those present, that an informal but recognized social organization be set up, to be more than a bunch of friends getting together but less than a fully fledged Committee function. The former situation is divorced from the Group and doesn't help it at all while the Committee organizes a social event it often involves paying a deposit or full cost, which is not recovered if there is insufficient support. I would like to see self-financing events open to any and all BSFG members, advertised through the *BRUM GROUP NEWS* with, I hope, ideas coming from members themselves. It would be great if the event were of an 'SFish' nature

but, in any case, there should be some opportunity for members to socialize; a minimum group size for this would be about eight people.

You may have noticed several uses of the term 'I' so far - this is because 'I' got 'volunteered' into trying to organize things - so if you have any ideas for a socializing event please contact me at a Group evening or ring me on 021 373 4682 evenings Monday to Friday or Sunday afternoon/evening. Anything considered! I already have several ideas but I'm biased - I need you to balance things!

Returning to the events themselves I envisage that I would advertise an event within limits and see what the response is. Where money/booking is required this would be organized in advance, so that if we don't have enough advance bookings the event would not be booked or take place. For example I might advertise a Blackcountry evening coach tour with coach hire £50.00, price per member depending on response ie. five members at £10.00, ten at £5.00 and so on, once the cost of the coach is covered it would be booked, and anyone else can join on the night, thus reducing the cost per person. Or I might organize a no-cost event such as a visit to a place of interest - just time and place would be advertised.

It won't be as easy as it sounds - its always easier to do nothing than something - but in my opinion if something isn't done fairly soon there won't be much with which to do it!

Its up to you.

- Vernon Brown.

OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

B'HAM: Birmingham University SF & Fantasy Society. Contact David Wake at 160 Beaumont Road, Bournville, Birmingham, B30 1NY.

B'HAM: Genesis II *STAR TREK* Club, meet in members homes, 3 newsletters per year. Subs £3 to Kathy Yates, 167 Kingshurst Rd., Northfield, B'ham, B31 2LL.

B'HAM: "Midlands Space Society". Call Andy Salmon after 7pm on 021 565 4845.

LEICESTER: Leicester SF Group now meets on the first Friday of each month at 8pm in the Rainbow & Dove, 155 Charles St., call Steph Mortimer on 0533 833133.

STOURBRIDGE: SRS, is an independent *DR WHO* group which holds monthly meetings, from 7pm, in Stourbridge town centre. Admittance 75p (+ 50p for magazine). Contact via 18 Lychgate Ave., Stourbridge, DY9 0TS.

WALSALL: Arcadia is the alternative television society of the *DR WHO* fan group The Who-natics, meets quarterly in the Montmorency Suite of the Crest Hotel in Walsall. Contact Ian Riley, 36 Bude Road, Park Hall, Walsall, WS5 3EX, (Tel: 0922 38047).

Details are correct to the best of my knowledge, but please check to avoid inconvenience. - MT.

CHAIRMAN'S BIT

by Chris Chivers

The Jophan Report

by Martin Tudor

Sitting in the Chairmans chair for the first time I have come to realize what sitting in the hot seat means. Trying to do the juggling act between the long standing members who have definite views on "what is or what is not" science fiction and the newer members who have a broader base on sf can be quite a headache.

In the past 20 years the Brum Group has outlasted many other sf groups, and we have built a good reputation throughout the science fiction community. But we cannot rest on our laurels. A new generation of fans have come along with the growth of TV, Video and Films. In the meetings where we have had a media guest, the number of people attending has been increased by members of groups, when they have been notified. The Brum Group has the potential to become one of the major sf groups in the country, but in the past has tended to overlook the other areas of science fiction outside the literary field. I personally feel that the Brum Group has to expand, and welcome new members into the group, also to be able to cater for other interests outside books.

The third decade of the Group's history poses a challenge to all of the membership, whether we stay a small parochial group, or whether we grow in step with the changes in technology that have spread science fiction to the general public. We have the perfect showcase in Twentycon and Novacon with which to promote the Brum Group let us take advantage of it. Equally these two events provide some of our newer members, who have never been to a convention, with ample opportunity to do so - I hope they will attend one, or both, of these events, if they do I'm sure they will enjoy themselves.

In this year's Committee we have a wealth of experience and I would like to especially welcome Richard Standage as Treasurer and Al Johnston as Publicity Officer. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Murphy, Dave Hardy, Andy White and Bernie Evans for their sterling work on the Brum Group over the past year.

Finally I would like to urge all members to urge their friends and colleagues to attend our forthcoming meetings which so far include Richard Evans (15 Feb), Anne McCaffrey (20 March) and Rob Grant & Doug Naylor (19 Apr).

The famous British sf magazine *NEW WORLDS* is to be published again this year after a lapse of more than 10 years. Sf author Michael Moorcock, who began his tenure as editor of *NEW WORLDS* in 1964 and retains the rights to the title, has authorized four new paperback volumes with the possibility of more to come. The latest incarnation of *NEW WORLDS* will be edited by author David Garnett, editor of the original anthologies *ZENITH* and *ZENITH 2* and the "best of the year" series the *ORBIT SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK*. The four *NEW WORLDS* books have been commissioned for Gollancz by this month's speaker Richard Evans, and will appear in paperback between August 1991 & August 1993.

Garnett explained that when he was looking for another publisher after the cancellation of the *ZENITH* series, Moorcock suggested *ZENITH* should metamorphise into *NEW WORLDS*. Evans, who had expressed an interest in continuing *ZENITH*, heard Garnett and Moorcock planned to bring back *NEW WORLDS* and immediately agreed Gollancz would be the publisher. Garnett added that his intention with *ZENITH* was to publish the best contemporary sf he could find "stories for the next millenium" and says that the same would be true of *NEW WORLDS*. Moorcock added that he was impressed by Garnett's track record as an editor and frustrated "that publishers weren't doing enough to encourage the wealth of new talent emerging from the sf field", so he offered Garnett the editorship of *NEW WORLDS* "if he could find a publisher willing to commit themselves fully to the project. Richard Evans of Gollancz was enthusiastic and positive from the beginning and in very little time offered the kind of commitment needed. I think David Garnett's *NEW WORLDS* is going to set the standards for the nineties - and we might even produce something that looks as if it were *designed* in the nineties! I see *NEW WORLDS* becoming the tip of an iceberg consisting chiefly of the semi-professional magazines represented, for instance, by the New SF Alliance. While David will be the sole editor for *NEW WORLDS*, I shall be available to help with presentation and so on and I'll be contributing. I have a feeling my first guest editorial will have something to say about the present caution and cynicism of the literary world, including the sf world."

Garnett informed me that although the two volumes of *ZENITH* were all-British, his *NEW WORLDS* would follow its previous incarnation in featuring American authors. "Living in Britain," he continued, "it will be easier to work with British writers ; but I have a budget which (at current exchange rates !) allows me to match the best rates paid by the American sf magazines. *NEW WORLDS* will primarily publish fiction, although there will be the occasional non-fiction piece."

He added: "It was because Michael Moorcock thought so highly of *ZENITH* that he asked me to become editor of *NEW WORLDS*, and I am very glad of the opportunity to continue what I began with *ZENITH*. Mike's issues of *NEW WORLDS* were undoubtedly the most important influence on my own early writing, and he sent me my first rejection slip, back in 1965. It was always my ambition to have a story published in *NEW WORLDS*. I suppose that becoming editor is almost as good..."

Still on the subject of Gollancz, I have just received a press release announcing *THE BOOKSHELF / VICTOR GOLLANZ LTD FIRST FANTASY NOVEL COMPETITION*. British publishers Gollancz and the Radio 4 programme *BOOKSHELF* are searching for "new writers of fantasy, a genre that encompasses Edgar Allan Poe, Ramsey Cambell, and James Herbert, as well as JRR Tolkien, Mervyn Peake, Robert Holdstock, and Ursula Le Guin." To encourage new writers to "this ever-growing field" Gollancz and *BOOKSHELF* are offering £4,000 for the best novel submitted.

The prize money will take the form of an outright prize of £2,000 to the winner, together with an advance against royalties of £2,000 for worldwide volume publication rights of the winning entry by Gollancz. Two runners-up will receive prizes of £500 each, and Victor Gollancz will hold options to publish both at a later date.

The judges of the competition will be Richard Evans (this month's speaker and Publishing Director of Gollancz's sf division), Faith Brooker (Senior Science Fiction Editor, Gollancz), Nigel Forde (Editor of *BOOKSHELF*), Mary Gentle (author of *GOLDEN WITCHBREED* and *ANCIENT LIGHT*) and Terry Pratchett (creator of the bestselling Discworld novels).

The competition was announced on *BOOKSHELF*, on the 24th of January, and entry forms are available from Mark Hutchinson, Publicity Department, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 14 Henrietta Street, London, WC2E 8QJ. The closing date for entries is the 30th of July 1991 and the names of the prize-winners will be announced on the *BOOKSHELF* programme in October 1991

and at the Fantasycon XVI at the Ramada Inn West London on the weekend 15th-17th November 1991. The winning novel will be published by Gollancz in 1992.

I have also received an interesting Press Release from Pengelly Mulliken Publicity, I feel that it is worth quoting in full:

"Because of false claims made recently by a certain British author of horror fiction, publishers Hodder & Stoughton feel it necessary to issue a brief statement.

"Without question James Herbert is the Number One Horror Fiction Writer in the UK, his sales consistently outselling even the American master of horror, Stephen King.

"Herbert's sales exceed 26 million copies worldwide. His book *THE FOG* has sold more than 1 million copies in the UK alone, and an earlier work, *THE RATS*, will follow suit this year.

"His latest, *CREED*, is still in the top 20 hardback bestseller list after starting at the very top over five months ago.

"If other publishers wish to claim this hard-earned position for their own genre authors, it is important that they substantiate their contention ; otherwise the book trade, the media, and the book-buyers themselves are left misled and confused."

So are you confused ? I am. Although I might hazard a guess that the above *could* be related to the recent tv appearance on *CENTRAL WEEKEND LIVE* of Shaun Hutson where I seem to remember some mention of massive sales. It is also possible that the recent poster campaign concerning Mr Hutson's books on the London Underground may have something to do with the matter. Perhaps Shaun Hutson, John Jarrold or someone else from the Macdonald Group would care to comment ?

Donald A Wollheim, whose 50-year career in science fiction influenced every aspect of the genre, died in his sleep on 1 November 1990, apparently after a heart attack. He was 76.

Novacon 19's guest of honour, Geoff Ryman, followed up his success in the Arthur C Clarke Award ballot by winning the John W Campbell Memorial Award, again with *THE CHILD GARDEN*. This is not to be confused with the John W Campbell Award presented at world sf conventions, which is specifically for new writers. The runners-up were K W Jeter's *FAREWELL HORIZONTAL* and John Kessel's *GOOD NEWS FROM OUTER SPACE*.

The new British science fiction magazine *SF NEXUS* has abandoned its planned December launch

and rescheduled its debut for March. The announcement was made through a Christmas card sent out to would-be readers, which also included a short story by editor Paul Brazier.

Pan Books will publish Paul Preuss' novel *HIDE AND SEEK* in June ; it's the third in his "Venus Prime" series, spun off from the writings of Arthur C Clarke.

Charles De Lint's fantasy novel *MOONHEART* has been chosen as one of the nine titles featured in the W H Smith summer 1991 fantasy promotion. All nine will be showcased in the chain's giveaway magazine *BOOKCASE*, which has a circulation of 600,000.

Birmingham's own Anne Gay will see the publication of her second science fiction novel *THE BROOCH OF AZURE MIDNIGHT* in hardback by Orbit in May, a year after the release of her debut novel *MINDSAIL*. Anne informs me that "the cover is lovely !". Currently she is working on her third novel *DANCING ON THE VOLCANO*.

The veteran science fiction magazine *AMAZING STORIES* will be relaunched as a glossy news-stand title in May, following the final digest edition in March (meaning it will miss its own 65th birthday). Incoming editor Kim Mohan, whose former work includes editing *DRAGON* (like his new project, owned by the games publisher TSR), has apparently committed himself to providing a regular showcase for previously unpublished writers. Submissions can be forwarded to TSR at Box 111, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, USA.

Pause for a quick plug: *CRITICAL WAVE*'s regular coverage of British sf markets can be found in #20 (now available) while the crucial role *AMAZING STORIES* played in the formation of organised sf fandom was examined by historian Mike Ashley in *CRITICAL WAVE #19*, both are available for £1.50 each (inclusive of postage & packing) from: *CRITICAL WAVE PUBLICATIONS*, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG.

Julia Roberts has been signed to play Tinkerbell opposite Dustin Hoffman's Captain Hook in Steven Spielberg's *PETER PAN* film which will be called *HOOK*, Robin Williams has been cast as Peter Pan.

The inevitable sequel to *HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS* will be entitled *HONEY, I BLEW UP THE BABY*.

Kathy Bates, who co-stars with James Caan in the film adaptation of Stephen King's *MISERY*, collected a Golden Globe for Best

Dramatic Actress. Hollywood insiders generally regard the Golden Globes as a good pointer towards who will collect Oscars a couple of months later.

DR WHO is one of the casualties of the BSB / SKY TELEVISION merger. The repeat of "The Daleks" on 1 December 1990 will be the last episode to be screened for the foreseeable future. BSB paid Equity £3.5 million for 1000 hours of *DR WHO* programmes (which included 200 hours of *DR WHO*, the agreement depending on BSB producing a given percentage of home-grown drama. Unfortunately this agreement doesn't extend to SKY who buy all their series from other companies. The newly formed company originally showed a few BBC programmes but was forced to drop them after Equity threatened legal action. Equity are trying to come to a similar agreement with 'BSKYB' but have run into difficulties due to the fact that the new company does not expect to break even until 1993 at the earliest.

The Kaleidoscope Theatre Company will present the world premiere of its performance of *LOVE LIES BLEEDING* at the Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, from Wednesday the 6th of March to Sunday the 10th of March 1991. Apparently *LOVE LIES BLEEDING* is "a glimpse into a mystical and magical world as the Arthurian tale of the greatest quest of all is unveiled - the search for the Holy Grail. A medieval tapestry of romance and picture poetry, richly interwoven with mime, music, dance, drama and voice."

Seat prices range from £4.00 through to £9.00, standing is £3.00. All bookings (incl. credit cards) can be made by calling 0789 295623 between 9.30am and 8.00pm, Monday to Saturday.

The Kaleidoscope Theatre Company is run by full-time volunteers, assisted by part-time volunteers, and aims to integrate mentally handicapped actors into society through theatre. Most of its productions have a fantasy theme. After this run, the company (which is based in Walsall) will present the play at the Edinburgh Festival and at an international festival in Hungary.

MANCON VI, which was to have been held over the weekend of the 12th-15th of July 1991, has been cancelled. A combination of factors such as the considerable increase in cost of trans-Atlantic air fares, and the large number of other conventions now scheduled for the same time of year, have convinced the committee that the fact that the con boasts both Harlan Ellison and Iain

Banks as guests of honour will not be enough to attract sufficient members to guarantee its financial viability.

The Mancon VI committee have informed me that a full refund will be paid to all members in due course, and they hope to invite Harlan over for a similar event at some time in the future. Any enquires regarding the convention should be addressed to Mancon VI, 8 Mardale Avenue, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA11 7AH.

Still on the subject of conventions, Steve and Ann Green wish to sell their memberships of Mexican 4. They are asking £12.50 each for the memberships (the current price is £15.00) call 021 706 0108 if you are interested.

The candidates for the 1991 Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund race will be Pam Wells, Abigail Frost (both from Britain) and Bruno Ogorolec (from Yugoslavia). The victor will attend the Chicago worldcon, Chicon V, in August this year. Ballots are available from the current British administrators (address below) as well as in this issue of *BRUM GROUP NEWS*: Votes must reach the administrators by 15 May.

The TAFF Good Food Guide mentioned in the newsletter *TWO TIMES TAFF #4* (also available from the administrators - see the ballot form for addresses) will now be a joint production of TAFF, GUFF and Fans Across the World. The British TAFF administrators, Christina Lake and Lilian Edwards, tell us that they are "looking for reviews from anyone with a favourite eating place they wish to recommend." The reviews should be short with as much detail as necessary (typical dishes, average prices, opening hours / days, telephone number and address), although they won't necessarily refuse longer, funnier ones... Christina adds that "So far the only one to respond has been Ken Lake. Now we don't want the whole of fandom eating in Ken's favourite restaurants, do we?" All reviews should be sent to Lilian Edwards at 2 Spring Valley Terrace, Morningside, Edinburgh, EH10 4QD by early May. When completed, the Good Food Guide will be sold to raise money for TAFF, GUFF and Fans Across the World.

Reviews editor Mick Evans, TAFF candidate Pam Wells and *CRITICAL WAVE*'s Steve Green were amongst the additions to "Major's Millions" around Christmas. Although we are happy to report that Ms Wells started a new job in January, and that Mr Green has decided to launch himself on to an unsuspecting world in a new career as a (wait for it) freelance

writer (!), our very own Mick Evans has not been so lucky. Even now Mick continues his fight with the DSS, DOEP etc. Apparently his former employer at some time transposed some digit in his National Insurance number -- meaning that for seven years someone else has been credited with Mick's 'stamp'... Best of luck Mick!

Finally, rumour has it that Anne Rice, the bestselling author of such books as *THE MUMMY* and *THE VAMPIRE CHRONICLES* (featuring the vampire Lestat) has cancelled her forthcoming promotional tour (which was to launch her latest book *THE WITCHING HOUR*) due to fear of Gulf related terrorist activity.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

16 FEBRUARY - B'ham Comic Mart, new ground floor venue at the Carrs Lane Church Centre, just off High Street near Marks & Spencers in the city centre. "A huge selection of comics, film/tv magazines, books, posters, models, games & sf/fantasy material." Opens midday. Further details from Golden Orbit, 18 Nelson Street, York, YO3 7NJ.

26 FEBRUARY - At 4.30pm Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, bestselling authors of the *Dragonlance* series, will be signing copies of their new paperback *DRAGON WING* and their new hardback *ELVEN STAR*, at Andromeda Bookshop, 84 Suffolk Street, Birmingham. (All information regarding signing sessions listed here is correct to the best of my knowledge, but it is wise to call Andromeda on 021 643 1999 to avoid disappointment.)

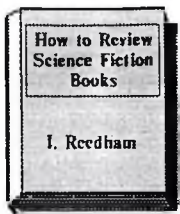
9 MARCH - "Britain's bestselling fantasy author", David Gemmell, will be signing his new novel *THE LION OF MACEDON* from noon.

20 MARCH - Anne McCaffrey author of the *Pern* *Dragonrider* books talks to the BSFG. Please note that she will signing copies of the 'A' format *RENEGADES OF PERN*, the 'C' format edition of *THE ROWAN*, and the hardback editions of *PEGASUS IN FLIGHT* and *SASSINAK* (the latter written with Elizabeth Moon), at Andromeda Bookshop.

19 APRIL - The writers of the *RED DWARF* television series, Rob Grant and Doug Naylor, talk to the BSFG. (Please note that before the meeting, between 5pm and 6pm they will be signing copies of the paperback edition of *BETTER THAN LIFE* at Andromeda Bookshop.)

3-6 MAY - UFP'91, 31st British *STAR TREK* con, Grand Hotel, Birmingham. £25 to attend, to Kim Farey, 135 Greenstead Rd., Loughton, Essex.

SUMMER - Twentytwo, 20th anniversary party of the BSFG: WATCH THIS SPACE.



Book Reviews

All books reviewed here by members were provided by the publishers, who receive a copy of this Newsletter. Members may keep review copies (or may donate them as Raffle or Auction items. . .)

Please keep reviews to under 150 words unless instructed otherwise. Deadline for reviews: at least two weeks before next Group meeting.

TALES OF PIRX THE PILOT by Stanislaw Lem; Mandarin; 206 pages; £4.99 paperback.

Reviewed by Al Johnston.

An enjoyable collection of five stories from the early career of Pirx, dreamer and space pilot, harking back to golden age SF; when space travel was sufficient adventure in itself. In these episodes it is again as Lem's hero confronts the practicalities and hazards of astronautics commonly taken for granted by other authors. In a hostile environment even a minor technical glitch can be fatal. This premise allows Lem to build up a powerful atmosphere of mystery. Well worth reading.

USE OF WEAPONS by Iain M Banks; Orbit; 368 pages; £12.95 hardback.

Reviewed by Mick Evans.

This is Iain Banks' third novel in the same universe as *Consider Phlebas* and *The Player of Games*, and I found it his most powerful book since *The Wasp Factory*. It has some wonderful characters:- Cheradenine Zakalwe, a marvellous main protagonist; Diziet Sma, a manipulative representative of the Culture; and a highly amusing drone, Skaffen-Amitskaw. The plot revolves around the mercenary Zakalwe's various adventures in the pay of the Culture (he gets into some truly amazing scrapes) while at various intervals we are treated to snatches from his past which hides a dark secret. I found these constant scene changes a little annoying at first, feeling that they were stopping the flow of the story, however they are vindicated by a powerful finale. A terrific book filled with good dialogue, humour and real characters in an SF element. What more could you ask!

TOTAL RECALL by Piers Anthony; Legend; 224 pages; £3.99 paperback.

Reviewed by David B Wake.

This is the novelisation of the recent Arnold Schwarzenegger film and based on the Philip K Dick story "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale". It's one of the few of his stories I haven't read so I can't comment on the translation from the original. I found the film very exiting, and Science Fiction enough to overcome the considerable hurdle of the gratuitous (and it was) violence. I was amazed by it. (Though what would it have been like if Harrison Ford had played the lead?) Piers Anth-

ony here gives us the script with the "he said's" and the description added, and some probing into the thoughts of the characters. Just what you'd expect, and faithfully done on the surface. However I feel that the Dickensian "reality shifts" so well done in the film (and ignored in that other Dick film *Bladerunner*) are blunted by Anthony's changes. The whole idea of is he-or-isn't he-the baddy? is thrown away as Anthony steps into one camp completely. (No prizes for guessing which). I feel a novelisation should remain faithful to the film and yet add something. Somehow Anthony's additions add nothing, and somehow make it unfaithful, whereas.....

STAR TREK: THE LOST YEARS by J M Dillard; Pan; 307 pages; £3.99 paperback.

Reviewed by David B Wake.

..... *Star Trek: The Lost Years* is nothing but addition. The novel concerns itself with the unfiled years between the end of the TV series and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. It is faithful in trying to bridge the gap. The uniform changes and so on are included. Most of it concerns the changes in circumstances to set up the Star Trek universe for the first film. It does this well - I didn't spot any errors. But what of the story? It concentrates on Kirk, Spock and McCoy. Spock's daddy, Sarek, and Uhuru also appear, as do some characters from previous Star Trek books, who have their own following, the introduction assures me. It concerns events on Vulcan, and the mystic Kolinahr. It's OK. I don't want to be damning with slight praise, OK is exactly the right word whereas.....

REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS by Ben Aaronovitch; Target; 160 pages; £2.50 paperback.

Reviewed by David B Wake.

..... *Remembrance of the Daleks* is brilliant. I am a Doctor Who fan, it is my religion, and I have collected all the books. The shelf is six feet long, and full, and I have read them all. It must be said, though, that most are OK, some are more OK than others, and quite a lot are less than OK. *Remembrance of the Daleks* is unbelievable in comparison. I'd seen the story on video numerous times when my two-year old daughter went through a phase, and yet still this book gripped me. I had to finish it in one sitting, something I haven't done in years (true, even if I am an SF fan). This

book has cyberpunk bits in it! The actual prose is quite literary, and it covers questions not even mentioned in the TV version. It adds something. The Dalek character is delved into; they are not simple robots. And it is completely faithful. Everything a novelisation should be. This book wasn't passed on for review, it languished on my must-be-read pile, I had better things to do, I thought. But now I must pass the word. Aaronovitch can write.

MIDNIGHT'S SUN by Garry Kilworth; Unwin Hyman; 317 pages; £12.95 hardback. Reviewed by Tony Morton.

A story of wolves told by Kilworth as a "folk tale" (his words), where Athaba is born, grows up and relates to the pack and his surroundings. Several adventures befall Athaba, including becoming Outcast, the loss of the pack and finding true love. Overall, rather a similar outline as found in *Hunters Moon*, a story of foxes where Kilworth tells the "folk tale" of foxes growing up, etc. Not as thoroughly convincing as *Hunters Moon*, but presumably because of the similarities. Several of the adventures do stand up well; the human-wolf survival pact after the aircrash and later recognition in other surroundings is well planned, and the aloneness Athaba feels as outcast is particularly poignant. But I'm not sure if Kilworth is trying to gain sympathy for wolves or just angry (justifiably) at mans actions on his environment and in particular to wolves. This comes over in the book quite strongly and (for me) made it worth reading.

SOLDIER OF ANOTHER FORTUNE by Mike Shupp; Headline; 396 pages; £4.50 paperback.

Reviewed by Al Johnston.

The latest volume of *The Destiny Makers*, a series which gets worse as it gets on. We are promised an end with the next volume; to which I would raise two queries; firstly, why so late? and secondly, given the indecision and slow pace displayed so far, how? After his first book Mike Shupp has got himself lost in a morass of irrelevant and increasingly uninteresting detail, which in this effort becomes unreadable. He should try something else as a matter of urgency.

THE ANTRAK WARS 6: EARTH THUNDER by Patrick Tilley; Sphere; 484 pages; £3.99 p/back.

Reviewed by Chris Chivers.

The continuing saga of the *Antrak Wars* by Patrick Tilley grows and grows. *Earth Thunder*, book 6 of the epic story, continues the battle between the Federation and the Mute tribes, and the role of Cadillac, Clearwater and Steve and Roz Brickman. The child of Steve and Clearwater, believed to be

the Thrice-Gifted One of the Talisman Prophecy of Mute legend, was causing trouble for the President General and the upper echelons of the Federation command. The Mutes were also organising into a loose federation of tribal communities to defend their lands against the opposing forces of Ne-Issan to the east and the Federation to the south. The stage set by Patrick Tilley in the five previous books of the *Antrak Wars* comes to an inconclusive end in *Earth Thunder*. Will we have yet another volume to wrap up the loose ends, or will we get another six volumes to carry on the saga as the children of Cadillac and Roz, and Steve and Clearwater grow to maturity? Again a credible plot line has been stretched too far, even though he does a very serviceable job.

AZAZEL by Isaac Asimov; Bantam; 221 pages; £3.50 paperback. Reviewed by Michael Jones.

The author's friend George has access to a two-centimetre-tall demon he calls Azazel, who is really an extraterrestrial being possessed of extraordinary powers. The magazine stories collected here tell how George gets Azazel to perform miracles to help various friends and acquaintances, only to find that by some twist the end result is always less beneficial than was intended. It is all typical Asimov; that is to say excellently written, slightly humorous, very easily readable and quite lightweight. There are eighteen of the stories so it would be rather hard to wade through the whole lot at one sitting, but it is a good book for dipping into in those spare moments. Recommended to all Asimov fans and those less discerning collectors.

FOUR PAST MIDNIGHT by Stephen King; Hodder & Stoughton; 676 pages; £14.99 hardback.

Reviewed by Chris Morgan.

Excitement is what King's fiction is all about - so much excitement that you can't put the book down, don't even notice stylistic cliches and plot contrivances. This is a collection of four big new stories, of which one, "The Langoliers", is SF and over 200 pages long, describing how an airliner flying over central USA gets transported to somewhere completely different. "Secret Window, Secret Garden" is about plagiarism and the effect that such an accusation has on an author. In "The Library Policeman" a man is threatened with the ultimate sanction for not returning his library books on time (don't laugh it's scarily believable on the page). And "The Sun Dog" revolves around such a stunningly simple but clever idea that I'll leave you to discover it for yourself. As with a previous collection of four long stories *Different Seasons*, *Four Past Midnight* is better than some of King's full-length novels.